

REMARKS

Claim 3-9 and 15-25 are pending in this application. By the Office Action, claims 10-14 are withdrawn from consideration; claims 1-3 and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b); claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e); and claims 4-6 are objected to. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2 and 10-14 are canceled; claims 3 and 5-9 are amended; and new claims 15-25 are added. Support for the amended and new claims can be found in the claims as originally filed. No new matter is added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 4-6 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but are otherwise allowable. By this Amendment, objected-to claim 4 is written in independent form, and claims 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are amended to depend from amended claim 4. In addition, objected-to claims 5 and 6 are written in independent form as new claims 15 and 21, respectively, with added new dependent claims that correspond to original claims 3 and 6-9 as depending from claim 15 and dependent claims that correspond to original claims 3 and 7-9 as depending from claim 21. Accordingly, the claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

I. **Restriction Requirement**

Claims 10-14 are withdrawn from consideration as subject to a Restriction Requirement. By this Amendment, non-elected claims 10-14 are canceled without prejudice to the filing of a divisional application.

II. **Rejections Under §102**

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Keiner. Claims 1 and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Kotsubo. Further, claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Kishi.

Although Applicant does not necessarily agree with the rejections, the claims are amended to be directed to the allowable subject matter of non-rejected claims 4, 5, and 6. In

particular, claim 4 is amended into independent form to incorporate the limitations of claims 1 and 2. Further, claims 5 and 6 are similarly amended into independent form as new claims 15 and 21, respectively. Accordingly, the rejections are overcome and should be withdrawn.

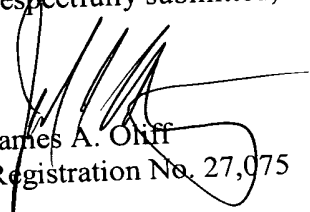
Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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JAO:JSA

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